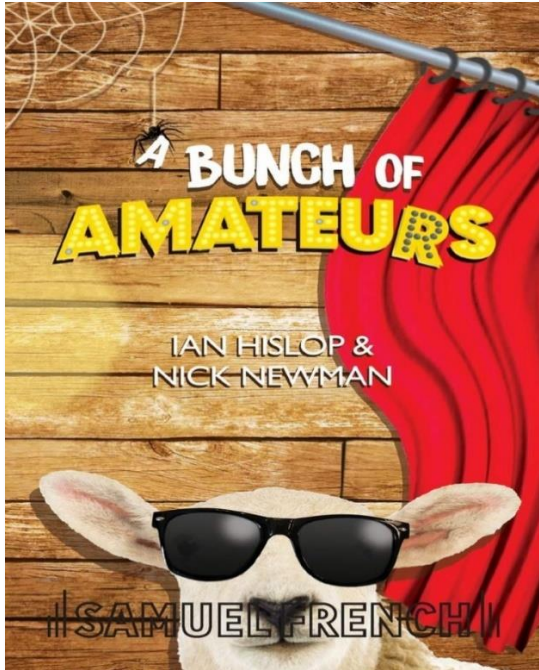


AUDITION NOTICE

A Bunch of Amateurs by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman



Audition Date:

Sunday, 18th September 2022, 12.00pm

at Bromley Little Theatre, North Street,
Bromley, BR1 1 SB

Performance Dates:

Friday, 10th – Saturday, 18th February 2023,
7.45pm (no performance on Sunday, 12th
February)

Charity Preview: Thursday, 9th February
2023, 7.45pm

A Bromley Little Theatre Main House Show

A Bunch of Amateurs

by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman

Directed by Mike Darbon

Keen to boost his flagging career, fading Hollywood action hero Jefferson Steel arrives in England to play King Lear in Stratford – only to find that this is not the birthplace of the Bard, but a sleepy Suffolk village. And instead of Sir Kenneth Branagh and Dame Judi Dench, the cast are a bunch of amateurs trying to save their theatre from developers.

Ian Hislop and Nick Newman's *A Bunch of Amateurs* started life as a film screenplay for a movie released in cinemas in 2008 and starring Burt Reynolds, Sir Derek Jacobi, Imelda Staunton and Samantha Bond in the lead roles. It was selected for that year's Royal Film Performance. Apparently, the Queen enjoyed it so much that she requested a second screening of it that Christmas.

A Bunch of Amateurs finally arrived on stage as a fully formed play at the Watermill Theatre in Newbury in May 2014.

Ian Hislop and Nick Newman describe ***A Bunch of Amateurs*** as ‘a love letter to amateur dramatics’ and so it is.

*‘The experience of writing the film was to have a direct impact on the writing of the subsequent play. When the Watermill Theatre finally commissioned us to write **Amateurs** for the stage, we knew we could make it much richer and more realistic, tearing up the screenplay to produce a new script to reflect the story’s theatricality with a smaller cast but with more Shakespeare, more am-drams and more jokes about Hollywood stardom’. (Nick Newman)*

The original Watermill production also featured a unique combination of professionals and amateurs in the cast with members of the local community theatre appearing in key scenes to bolster the action. So in reality, as in the play, the worlds of the amateurs and professionals collided. We may not be doing this in our production unless we can find a washed-up Hollywood star to come to Bromley for no money! Any suggestions?!...

... *“this new cracking stage version fizzes along with verve and energy”* British Theatre Guide

... *“this terrific comedy, packed with killer dialogue, has a great story”* WhatsonStage

... *“the acerbic wit of Hislop and Newman metamorphoses into some hugely witty one-liners”* The Stage

... *“a laugh a minute!”* The Mail on Sunday

This production contains occasional strong language.

You can see a short interview with Ian Hislop and Nick Newman talking about their play ahead of a touring production at the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham here:

<https://youtu.be/rS35r0wfmU>

A BUNCH OF AMATEURS

DESCRIPTIONS OF CHARACTERS

Please note that the characters of Jefferson Steel and his daughter, Jessica, require American accents. The characters of Mary Plunkett and Denis Dobbins would work best with local Suffolk accents. Playing ages are approximate and have been given a wide range of flexibility.

JEFFERSON STEEL - A fading Hollywood star who is arrogant, insecure, brash, gauche, demanding, vulnerable and ultimately aware of his own absurdity. **Playing age: Late 40’s – early 60’s.**

DOROTHY NETTLE - Director of the Stratford Players and the moving force behind keeping the theatre alive. Her sweet and accommodating manner conceals her inner steel. **Playing age: Late 30's – early 50's.**

JESSICA STEEL - Jefferson's teenage daughter, who has been neglected by her Hollywood star father and now wants to make him pay for it. **Playing age: Late teen's – early 20's.**

NIGEL DEWBURY - Solicitor and leading light of the Stratford Players. Pompous, stuck-up and self-regarding, he believes he is the star of the show, and should play all the leading roles. He also fancies his romantic chances with Dorothy. **Playing age: Mid 50's – early 70's.**

MARY PLUNKETT - Owner of the Rectory bed and breakfast. Jolly, generous and an unashamedly adoring Jefferson Steel fan -- although somewhat confused about which roles he played in his films, and how keen he is on her. **Playing age: Mid 40's – Late 50's.**

DENIS DOBBINS - Handyman and village Mr. Fixit. Avuncular though slightly dull, Denis is star-struck by Jefferson and fancies heading up his entourage of one. **Playing age: Indeterminate! Probably in his 50's or 60's but there's a lot of flexibility with this character.**

LAUREN BELL - Thirty-something marketing executive former physiotherapist and the sponsor's wife. Passionate about the arts and smarter than her husband allows her to be, she's treated as a bimbo because of her looks. **Playing age: As the description says, she's "30 something" and pretty glamorous! But could easily be played by an actress in her mid to late 20's.**

The main action of the play takes place in a barn converted into a theatre in rural Suffolk.

If you would like to read a copy of the script prior to the auditions, or discuss any aspects of the play or rehearsals, please contact the director, Mike Darbon, on 07802 914917 or via email at michael@thedarbons.com. Some suggested audition pieces should become available closer to the audition date.

Rehearsals are scheduled to begin in early December 2022, with a break for Christmas and New Year between the 22nd December 2022 and 3rd January 2023. As ever, please only audition if you know you can make all the performance dates and are available across the full rehearsal period.

AUDITION PIECES BY CHARACTER:

A Bunch of Amateurs by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman

NOTES:

1. Audition pieces will be generally, though not exclusively, selected from the following sequences for each character.
2. As many of the scenes involve conversations and dialogue between several characters at once, auditions will be generally held collectively with groups of actors playing each different role.

DOROTHY

ACT 1

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Nigel Mary Denis	1: 1 1 - 3	Dorothy: Thank you all so much for coming.	Nigel: How about...nobody in their right mind
Jefferson Dorothy (Mary)	1:4 16 - 19	Jefferson re-enters Jefferson: Can you tell the concierge my bags are ready?	Dorothy: We are here. Jefferson: Oh.
Jefferson Dorothy	1:5 28 - 30	Jefferson: What's your problem? Why are you still so angry?	Jefferson: Nyh! I'm going to take a tour of downtown.
Nigel Dorothy Jefferson (Mary) Denis	1:5 30 - 33	Nigel: Dorothy – may I have a word?	Dorothy: Hello David!
(Denis) Jefferson Dorothy Jessica	1:6 43 - 45	Denis: Wotcha, Jeff.	Dorothy: Good. Can we just see how this looks?

ACT 2

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Jefferson Lauren	2:5 69 - 71	Dorothy: So where are all the people lining up?	Jefferson: Yeah, thanks. Dorothy/Fool: Song

Plus Ensemble scenes where indicated

JEFFERSON

ACT 1

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Jefferson (Journalists)	1:2 4 - 5	Jefferson: It's great to be back. I love this place.	Jefferson: I'll give it my best shot.
Dorothy Jefferson Nigel Mary Denis	1: 3 6 - 10	Dorothy: Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Mr. Jefferson Steel!	Jefferson: I was acting you idiot!
Jefferson Dorothy (Mary)	1:4 16 - 19	Jefferson re-enters Jefferson: Can you tell the concierge my bags are ready?	Dorothy: We are here. Jefferson: Oh.
Denis Dorothy Jefferson (Nigel) (Mary)	1:4 19 - 23	Denis: Morning Dorothy! Morning Mr. Steel.	Dorothy: Please tell me you've read the play?!
Jefferson Dorothy	1:5 28 - 30	Jefferson: What's your problem? Why are you still so angry?	Jefferson: Nyh! I'm going to take a tour of downtown.
Jefferson Jessica	1:6 39 - 42	Jefferson: So long as you're here, you might as well make yourself useful.	Jefferson: I'm back. Dorothy: Good.
(Denis) Jefferson Dorothy Jessica	1:6 43 - 45	Denis: Wotcha, Jeff.	Dorothy: Good. Can we just see how this looks?

ACT 2

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Jefferson Lauren (Mary)	2:2 56 - 58	Jefferson: Aaaargh! Are you sure you know what you are doing?	Jefferson: That is really good. Mary/Fool: Song
Dorothy Jefferson Lauren	2:5 69 - 71	Dorothy: So where are all the people lining up?	Jefferson: Yeah, thanks. Dorothy/Fool: Song

Plus Ensemble scenes where indicated

MARY

ACT 1

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Nigel Mary Denis	1: 1 1 - 3	Dorothy: Thank you all so much for coming.	Nigel: How about...nobody in their right mind
Jefferson Mary (Dorothy)	1:4 14 - 16	Mary: Good morning, Mr. Steel.	Mary: Really? (Jefferson re-enters)

ACT 2

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Jefferson Mary	2:3 62 - 64	Dorothy: She's a lovely girl.	Mary: That is a matter of opinion. Good night, Dorothy. Mary/Fool: Song
Nigel Denis Mary Jefferson Dorothy Jessica	2:4 65 - 68	Nigel: Jefferson's late as usual	Nigel: Or was it the wrong bed?

Plus Ensemble scenes where indicated

NIGEL

ACT 1

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Nigel Mary Denis	1: 1 1 - 3	Dorothy: Thank you all so much for coming.	Nigel: How about...nobody in their right mind

ACT 2

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Nigel Denis Mary Jefferson Dorothy Jessica	2:4 65 - 68	Nigel: Jefferson's late as usual	Nigel: Or was it the wrong bed?
Dorothy Lauren Nigel	2:7 79 - 81	Dorothy: He's not here.	Dorothy: We'd better find Jefferson.
Dorothy Jefferson Mary Denis Nigel	2:8 84 - 87	Dorothy: Good morning	Dorothy: ... and we were going to throw it away.

Plus Ensemble scenes where indicated

DENIS

ACT 1

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Nigel Mary Denis	1: 1 1 - 3	Dorothy: Thank you all so much for coming.	Nigel: How about...nobody in their right mind
Denis Dorothy Jefferson (Nigel) (Mary)	1:4 19 - 23	Denis: Morning Dorothy! Morning Mr. Steel.	Dorothy: Please tell me you've read the play?!
Nigel Dorothy Jefferson (Mary) Denis	1:5 30 - 33	Nigel: Dorothy – may I have a word?	Dorothy: Hello David!

Plus Ensemble scenes where indicated

JESSICA

ACT 1

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Jefferson Jessica	1:6 39 - 42	Jefferson: So long as you're here, you might as well make yourself useful.	Jefferson: I'm back. Dorothy: Good.
(Denis) Jefferson Dorothy Jessica	1:6 43 - 45	Denis: Wotcha, Jeff.	Dorothy: Good. Can we just see how this looks?

ACT 2

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Jessica Jefferson	2:3 59 - 62	Dorothy: All part of the noble theatrical tradition.	Jessica: Night Dad (she leaves)

Plus Ensemble scenes where indicated

LAUREN

ACT 2

CHARACTERS	SCENE/PAGES	FROM	TO
Jefferson Lauren (Mary)	2:2 56 - 58	Jefferson: Aaaargh! Are you sure you know what you are doing?	Jefferson: That is really good. Mary/Fool: Song
Dorothy Jefferson Lauren	2:5 69 - 71	Dorothy: So where are all the people lining up?	Jefferson: Yeah, thanks. Dorothy/Fool: Song
Dorothy Lauren Nigel	2:7 79 - 81	Dorothy: He's not here.	Dorothy: We'd better find Jefferson.

Plus Ensemble scenes where indicated

ENSEMBLE

ACT 1

CHARACTERS		FROM	TO
Lauren Jefferson Dorothy (Nigel) Lauren (Denis)	1:4 23 - 27	Lauren: Everything going OK?	Dorothy: Sorry. Jet lag Denis/Fool: Song
(David/Zoom) Dorothy Jefferson/Lear Nigel/Kent (Mary) Jessica	1:5 33 - 38	Dorothy: Hello David!	Nigel: At last! Some drama! Dorothy/Fool: Song
Dorothy (Denis) Jefferson Nigel Mary (Lauren)	1:6 45 - 51	Dorothy: Can we just see how this looks?	Lauren: So, everything going well?

ACT 2

CHARACTERS	PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy (Mary) Nigel Jefferson (Jessica) Denis	2:1 52 - 55	Dorothy: Good you're here. Jefferson has very kindly agreed...	Jefferson: It's not anguish, it's my back!
Nigel Denis Mary Jefferson Dorothy Jessica	2:4 65 - 68	Nigel: Jefferson's late as usual	Nigel: Or was it the wrong bed?
Jessica Dorothy Jefferson/Lear Denis Nigel	2:6 72 - 75	Jessica: What do you think, Dorothy?	Dorothy: The Stratford Players are finished! Denis/Fool Song

CHARACTERS	PAGES	FROM	TO
Dorothy Jefferson Mary Denis Nigel	2:8 84 - 87	Dorothy: Good morning	Dorothy: ... and we were going to throw it away.
Dorothy (Mary) Nigel (Jefferson) Lauren Denis Jessica	2:9 91 - 93	Dorothy: This makes a change from wearing curtain...	Jefferson: OK. Let's show 'ema what a bunch of amateurs can do.
Nigel/Kent Denis/ Gloucester Jefferson/Lear Lauren/Goneril Jessica/Cordelia Mary/Regan Dorothy/Fool	2:10 94 - 97	Nigel/Kent: I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.	Dorothy: Is there a Doctor in the house?